



# You Can Do It!

## *Jobs You May Not Have Thought About*

by Lecia Langston

What is a nontraditional job for a woman? And, more importantly, why should you care? A nontraditional female job is one that, traditionally, included few women in comparison to men. But isn't that definition just a little vague? The Bureau of Labor Statistics defines a nontraditional job as one where less than one-fourth of the workers are women

What are some nontraditional jobs for women? In Utah, they include many construction jobs, auto mechanics, engineers, dentists, doctors, lawyers, policemen, firefighters, and truck drivers—to name just a few. But, there are hundreds of choices—particularly since women tend to “cluster” in just a few occupations.

### **Why Should you Choose a Nontraditional Career?**

The most important reason to choose a nontraditional career is money. Generally, the more nontraditional the job is for a woman, the higher the pay. When you rank the highest-paying occupations in the economy, it becomes obvious that these occupations are dominated by men. Yet, wages are extremely important to women who must support themselves and/or their families. That's most working women.

And, it's not just the wages. Nontraditional jobs are more likely to offer better benefit packages, more chances for career advancement and better job security. Plus, they typically have less direct supervision.

Finally, many of these occupations will be growing in the future. There will be high demand for workers in these fields in upcoming years.

### **What Keeps Women from Choosing Nontraditional Careers?**

To enter a nontraditional career, women have to leave their “comfort zone.” They may be afraid they'll be harassed or ostracized. They worry that they'll be left out because they are the only female. The good news? Nontraditional careers already employ many women—you won't be the only one. Lucky you! Someone has already broken that employment ground.

Some women think they aren't strong enough to do heavy labor required by some nontraditional jobs. In fact, most nontraditional jobs are less physically demanding than housework, nursing, or waitressing. And, while the average woman is not as strong as the average man, some women are stronger than some men.

Some women think they don't have the innate mechanical or mathematical aptitude for nontraditional careers. Not true. A study conducted by the Johnson O'Conner Research Foundation Human Engineering Laboratory found no difference attributable to gender in 14 of 22 aptitude tests. In the eight remaining tests, women excelled in six while men scored higher in only two.

Women have also been taught to avoid nontraditional careers. But, think how many occupations have a male and female version—with the male version higher on the pay scale. For example, there are doctors and nurses, dentists and dental assistants, managers and secretaries, pilots and flight attendants, commission salesmen and cashiers, and so on, and so on.

## **Take the Plunge!**

**Be adventurous! Be bold! You CAN do it! Don't get stuck in the traditional rut. Choose your career based on how well it meets your wants and needs. Don't choose it just because it's a “woman's job”.**

